

NURSING

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Transforming patient care through professional practice

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A newsletter
from the office
of the Executive
Chief Nursing
Officer

Marilyn Dubree,
MSN, RN,
NE-BC

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JEANNETTE INTERIM CNO OF BEDFORD HOSPITAL

Joanie Jeannette, MSN, RN, MSN, NEA-BC, FACHE, has been named interim chief nursing officer of Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital, effective May 1.

“I am honored to be serving in this role and helping the community and staff in Bedford County,” Jeannette said. “I look forward to welcoming them to the Vanderbilt family. The staff and facility are great and will continue to complement the other community hospitals in our network, and I am excited to be part of that.”

Jeannette, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Nursing from Vanderbilt University, has more than 30 years of experience as a nurse and an extensive background of managing community hospitals. Her nursing career began in the 1980s at what was then Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital in the current building of Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital. She went on to hold nursing roles with increasing responsibility in hospitals throughout Florida, culminating in top leadership roles for Community Health Systems Inc. (CHS), from which VUMC acquired the Bedford hospital at the beginning of the year.

From 2007 to 2011, she was chief operating officer of Physicians Regional Medical Center, a 201-bed health care system in Collier County, Florida; and Peace River Regional Medical Center, a 219-bed facility in

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Happy Nurses Week! I hope you are celebrating yourselves and the wonderful care you provide to our patients and families. I celebrate you.

There is much good news to share this month. First, I would like to congratulate Joanie Jeannette on becoming interim chief nursing officer of Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital. Joanie has a long track record of leadership at Vanderbilt and at community hospitals. Her service is much appreciated.

Also in this issue, you will get to know

Marilyn Smith, chief nursing officer of our Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital. Marilyn has a really interesting story and I am so pleased she is now part of the Vanderbilt family.

Lastly, please read about our Palliative Care nurses who formed a band. Our nurses are truly the best.

Enjoy this issue,

Charlotte County, Florida. And from 2011 to 2015, she was chief executive officer of Lehigh Regional Medical Center, an 88-bed acute care hospital in Lehigh Acres, Florida.

“Joanie has been a transformational leader for many years. Her diverse administrative experience at Vanderbilt coupled with a history of community hospital leadership makes her ideal for this role,” said Executive Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC. “We are indebted to her for her leadership during this transition.”

Jeannette rejoined VUMC in 2015 as administrative director of the Medicine Patient Care Center, Inpatient, at Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital (VUAH). She has been responsible for the day-to-day clinical practice and operations of all inpatient medicine and hematology/oncology units in VUAH, including oversight of in-patient units with more than 240 beds.

In 2016, Jeannette initiated a Patient Flow Nurse role to



Jeannette

implemented, the average length of stay has decreased as well as 30-day readmission rates. Jeannette was honored with Vanderbilt’s Adrienne Ames Transformational Leadership Award in 2017.

Over the past six years, Jeannette has also successfully opened multiple medicine units at VUAH, along with a step down and transitional care unit. She proposed and initiated bringing the DAISY Award for recognition of nurses to Vanderbilt and has worked as the site coordinator for the adult hospital.

“We are very excited about this opportunity for Joanie and her skill and ability to make a difference in our sister hospital,” said Robin Steaban, MSN,

help increase the efficiency of the patient discharge process. Since the program was implemented, the average length of stay has decreased as well as 30-day readmission rates. Jeannette was honored with Vanderbilt’s Adrienne Ames Transformational Leadership Award in 2017. Over the past six years, Jeannette has also successfully opened multiple medicine units at VUAH, along with a step down and transitional care unit. She proposed and initiated bringing the DAISY Award for recognition of nurses to Vanderbilt and has worked as the site coordinator for the adult hospital. “We are very excited about this opportunity for Joanie and her skill and ability to make a difference in our sister hospital,” said Robin Steaban, MSN,

RN, NE-BC, chief nursing officer of Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital. “Joanie has been a main VUAH contributor across all five pillars. She is passionate about exceptional patient care, well-versed in expert nursing practice and an inspiring leader. She will be greatly missed here but we know she will be doing good things.”

Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital, located in Shelbyville, Tennessee, is a 60-bed, Joint Commission-accredited facility that employs approximately 275 physicians, nurses and staff and offers a range of inpatient and outpatient medical and surgical services, along with urgent care services. “We are so pleased to welcome Joanie to Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital,” said Bill Rich, MHSA, president of the hospital. “She is the right person at the right time for this position as we continue the exciting work of more closely integrating our hospital into the Vanderbilt Health enterprise.”

CELEBRATING NURSES IN MAY

Please mark your calendars for the following events and prepare to join us for an exciting month of inspirational and educational activities. Everyone is encouraged to attend each of the events.

• **Virtual State of Nursing Address** - Tuesday, May 25, from 8 to 9 a.m., via Zoom.

• **Nursing Honors** - Award presentations are being done locally; photos/videos and award book will be posted on the nursing website.

• **Virtual Blessing of Hands** - Details will be posted on vanderbiltnursing.com.

SMITH IS CNO OF TULLAHOMA-HARTON HOSPITAL

Marilyn Smith, DNP, MSN, RN, had an incredible and unlikely journey to her role as Chief Nursing Officer of Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital.

Born and raised on the Caribbean island of Jamaica, she moved to New York City at the age of 20 and graduated from Lehman College in the Bronx, part of City University of New York, with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, biology and anthropology.

"Nursing is a second career for me," Smith said. "I was a lab technician, and I used to visit nursing homes with my church group as a young person and saw my passion in helping the residents, feeding them, walking with them and talking with them and playing games with them. And that's where it drew me to be a nurse."

Four years after obtaining her initial degree, Smith received her nursing degree from the College of New Rochelle in New York. She spent the next 12 years as a psychiatric nurse working in New York. After moving to Georgia, Smith also worked as a medical-surgical nurse, a progressive care nurse and an emergency room nurse, where she was able to broaden her scope of practice.



Smith

degrees, before she and her husband, Delroy, settled in Tullahoma in 2019.

"It was actually what we were looking for that family life, that country life," she said. "If you want a country life and not the big city, this is it. It's a friendly, family-oriented community."

The Smiths have two sons: DJ, 24; and Dondre, 22; and daughter Madyson, 11.

Smith now supervises a dedicated staff of about 250 people at the 135-bed Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital, which VUMC acquired from subsidiaries of Community Health Systems Inc. (CHS) at the beginning of the year. Smith said she is excited to be part of Vanderbilt Health.

"To be a part of the Vanderbilt's family means being able to provide high-quality care to patients, families, and the communities that we serve," she said. "It means being involved in an organi-

zation that is dedicated to its mission and vision as well as the well-being of its employees, with core values that include diversity, inclusion and professional development."

Smith loves to brag on her fellow nurses, telling stories of their compassion. One nurse, whose husband is immunocompromised, still volunteered to work in the hospital's COVID-19 unit when the pandemic began. She slept outside her house to protect her husband.

"She slept in a hammock for days to make sure that she doesn't bring anything home, but at the same time, she wanted to make sure that she gets the opportunity to take care of these patients as well," Smith said. "Nurses here are very caring. We have nurses who have been here 40 years, who start out here in their career and retire here as well."

Executive Chief Nursing Officer Marilyn Dubree, MSN, RN, NE-BC, said Smith is an exemplary leader.

"Marilyn is an experienced and capable leader and a great advocate for patients and families in Tullahoma," she said. "It is a pleasure to work with her as Vanderbilt expands its reach throughout the state."

PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT NURSES WRITE, RECORD SONGS

Nashville singer-songwriter Megan Palmer's five-song EP, "Take Good Care, features well-known Nashville musicians who've played on songs from The Raconteurs and Jason Isbell, and big-name producer Andrija Tokic.

But Palmer, who previously recorded six albums over more than two decades, is more than a musical artist. She is a nurse on the Palliative Care Unit (PCU) at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and she and several of her fellow nurses and caregivers collaborated to write the songs beginning just weeks after the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. The sentiments in those lyrics reflect the anxieties and uncertainties of facing each day, caring for patients with a deadly virus before vaccines existed to prevent it and more advanced therapies existed to treat it.

"There was so much unknown, so many questions," said Palmer, BSN, RN. "Like you go to work and you're thinking, is today going to be the day that I catch COVID-19? People around me were catching it, and we were taking care

of COVID patients, and there was so much stress about it. To think back about it and know that I was writing songs about it even though I was in it, it's an interesting thing. Because usu-



Palliative Care Unit (PCU) nurse manager Paul Raymond, left, and care partner Anna Henderson, center, collaborated with singer-songwriter and PCU nurse Megan Palmer in her new songwriting project, "Take Good Care."

ally you'll write a song about something that you went through already, but these songs we wrote while we were in battle."

Now the world will hear "Take Good Care." Palmer will release one song per week, starting on National Nurses Day on May 6, and ending on National Cancer Survivor Day on June 3. (Palmer is a breast cancer survivor). The songs will be available on meganpalmer.com and streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music.

The album is Palmer's time capsule of the year 2020, when

her second career as a performing artist was indefinitely halted. While her gigs were cancelled, she realized perhaps the safest environment for her to collaborate musically was with the people she worked with in her primary career as a nurse. And the all-consuming pandemic was also the strong source of her inspiration.

So, Palmer asked her fellow nurses and caregivers to be co-writers, all but one of whom had never written a song. The one who had, PCU manager Paul

Raymond, MSN, RN, said he just writes and home-records songs for his own pleasure. He had never co-written a song, which he said is a hallmark of the Nashville music scene.

"This project is just so different," Raymond said. "It was created by a lot of just great, hardworking, dedicated, health care workers and nurses, primarily who are doing their best in a really, really hard circumstance. It's just kind of a sweet reminder of all the things we've done together in this nice, beautiful album of great music that we had a little bit of a part in to help Megan pull off."